

EXETER DIOCESAN SYNOD**Minutes of a meeting of the Exeter Diocesan Synod held at****County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter****on Saturday 18th March 2017 at 10.00am**

Introduction and Worship

The Bishop of Exeter in the chair

1. Apologies & Notices

- Apologies were received from 10 members of the House of Laity and 10 members of the House of Clergy.
- A warm welcome was extended to those who had come to inform the Synod about the visit last year to our link Diocese of Thika.
- Notice was given of the death of Diocesan Synod member the Revd. John Higman (Tavistock Deanery), who passed away on 2nd February 2017.
- Notice was also given of the retirement of the Diocesan Secretary, Mark Beedell after more than 20 years' service. An item would be added to the end of the agenda to say farewell.
- Members were reminded that the Diocesan Synod sends a representative to be a member of the Diocesan Council for Social Aid (DCSA). For the 4 year term since March 2013, that representative has been Mrs. Marguerite Shapland. The DCSA has requested that the representative for the next 4 years be appointed and has indicated that they would be very happy for Mrs. Shapland to continue in the role. Since Mrs. Shapland had indicated that she was willing to be so nominated, approval was given by general assent.

2. Minutes of meeting of 15th October 2016**Paper S/01/2017**

The minutes were approved without amendment.

3. To receive a presentation arising from a visit to the Diocese of Thika

The Archdeacon of Exeter explained that this was a tri-partite visit including the bishop and representatives of the diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf. The three diocesan bishops signed a covenant re-enforcing the links between the three dioceses.

Those who took part in the exchange outlined their experiences, focusing on the hospitality they received, the patterns of ministry and worship found in Thika, the Farming God's Way project educating farmers in crop management and water conservation, the Namratah Shah Children's Home, the concentration on, and

importance of, youth ministry, and the Umoja ('togetherness') project which aims to help churches engage with their communities.

Many of the participants spoke of the personal challenge to establish a greater reliance on prayer and the role of thanksgiving in their own lives. They also noted that the Thika region of Kenya is affected by the drought and famine which is causing suffering through much of East Africa. Members were encouraged to pray for the region and to donate to the Disasters Emergency Committee's fund or to the Farming God's Way project.

Members warmly received the presentations. The Bishop of Exeter reminded members that the next tripartite exchange would be held in the Exeter Diocese in 2018. Parishes and Mission Communities that wish to be involved should contact the Archdeacon of Exeter.

The Chair of the House of Laity in the chair

4. To receive a presentation on the Archbishop of Canterbury's 'Thy Kingdom Come' prayer focus for Ascension to Pentecost 2017 and to hear from a local initiative relating to 'Growing in Prayer' **Paper S/02/2017**

The Revd. Preb. Philip Sourbut explained the 'Thy Kingdom Come' prayer campaign, led by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The campaign focuses on the time between Ascension and Pentecost and encourages individuals and churches to develop prayer locally in a way that is appropriate for them. A video was shown of the Archbishop of Canterbury explaining the initiative (available at <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/videos>)

The Revd Jennie Appleby (Plymouth City Deanery) and the Revd Benedict Cambridge (Aylesbeare Deanery) outlined how they would approach this call to prayer in the Plymstock and Hooe and Littleham-cum-Exmouth mission communities, respectively. In the former the intention is to build on the experience of previous years when they had prayer walks and interactive prayer stations available in one of the church buildings. In the latter, the Bishop of Crediton will start the initiative with prayer on the streets culminating in a town-wide ecumenical prayer meeting.

Members were informed that template 'Thy Kingdom Come' prayer boxes are available from the Old Deanery. These are intended to be placed in church or community spaces so that people are able to write and leave prayers. A service will take place at Exeter Cathedral on Pentecost as a 'beacon event' and culmination of 'Thy Kingdom Come' in this Diocese; churches are asked send people to pray for God's renewal and, as part of that, to bring them the prayer boxes from their local contexts.

The presentation ended with a video featuring the Bishop of Exeter.
<http://exeter.anglican.org/bishop-robert-thy-kingdom-come/>

In the questions and comments that followed it was emphasised that this a good time to increase the profile of prayer locally as the national initiative will heighten awareness generally. Other suggestions included praying for an area from the highest local point,

setting up online calendars of local events and going out into the local community rather than waiting for them to come in.

5. To receive an update on the implementation of 'Shrinking the Footprint' and to consider possible future actions **Paper S/03/2017**

Mr. Martyn Goss, Director of Church and Society, outlined how climate change can be considered theologically, taking as starting points both creation and incarnation. He outlined the key priorities of the 'Shrinking the Footprint' initiative and the 10-year strategic plan begun in 2010. These include:

- Procurement of power, water and food
- Reducing the carbon footprint of our buildings and land
- Our use of transport
- Our lifestyles, personally and congregationally
- Our theology and worship

He highlighted that through our interaction with link dioceses we are able to see the impact of climate change through food insecurity and the displacement of people.

Within our own diocese this is seen through coastal erosion and flash flooding.

He also outlined some future areas of work which include reconvening the 'Shrinking the Footprint' working group, officer succession planning and becoming an eco-diocese.

In response to questions from members Mr Goss explained that the green energy supply offer available to parishes with Ecotricity was an attempt to capture economies of scale in procurement. There is also an intention to do this nationally to lower rates further. He also noted that under current arrangements it is more economically viable to install PV cells where the electricity is to be used on site rather than sold back to the national grid. This largely dictates where cells are installed. However, it has been possible to install them in conservation and heritage areas. There are also pilot schemes for using other energy sources. Changes in funding have made the installation of wind turbines less viable.

The Chair of the House of Clergy in the chair

6. To receive a financial update **Paper S/04/2017**

Mr. Neil Williams, Director of Finance and Acting Diocesan Secretary, presented the financial update and thanked all parishes for their contributions to the Common Fund through which the Diocesan Vision and Strategy was resourced. He reported that at the end of February 2017, 93.36% of the total Common Fund request for 2016 had been received, against target of 94%. This was slightly lower than comparable figure for 2015. The full request had been met by more than 80% of parishes but 7 parishes were listed in the paper as having made no contribution at all (one of which had in fact paid in full in the intervening period). Particular encouragement could be drawn from those parishes that had previously struggled to meet the whole request but now do so.

Mr. Williams further noted that the Review Group on the future of the Common Fund scheme of assessment (cf. Paper 08) was making progress and would return to the Synod in due course. It was giving consideration both to whether the scheme should be amended or replaced and also to how better to communicate the purposes to which the funding was put.

During discussion the following issues were raised:

- Clarification was sought concerning whether a smaller deficit than budgeted in one year would directly enable additional expenditure in the following year. It was noted that the budget was agreed on an annual basis taking all of the relevant information into account. However, the Synod was demonstrating by its approval of dedicated funding streams to support local mission (eg the Diocesan Mission and Growth Fund and the Diocesan New Housing Areas Fund) that where possible it would seek to direct available funding to where it could most productively be used. It also tried to keep the Common Fund request per participant down as far as possible.
- With reference to the parishes that had not made the full contribution requested of them, it was noted that there appeared to a range of motivations and reasons, from exceptional local events and circumstances to a chronic financial weakness, to a decision not to pay some or all of the contribution in spite of being able to do so. It was noted that significant time and effort was spent in engaging with and supporting such parishes (for example through the work of the Mission Resources Adviser and the provision of practical support such as the Parish Giving Scheme).

7. To receive a report from General Synod

Paper S/05/2017

Mrs Anne Foreman (General Synod) introduced her report of the February 2017 Group of Sessions. She noted that the debate of the take note motion on the House of Bishops' report on Marriage and Same Sex Relationships had generated much publicity and serious consideration would now need to be given to next steps both in the Diocese and nationally. The Synod had also spent a considerable amount of time on a wide range of legislative issues (from the ability to alter the number of PCCs in multi-parish benefices to the administrative arrangements for the management of clergy housing during a vacancy) and had narrowly rejected a motion relating to the preliminaries to marriage (such as the reading of banns).

The Synod had also given consideration to a report on the role of lay people in the common life of the Church of England, entitled 'Setting God's People Free'. The report is not particularly ground-breaking but the key will be in the comprehensive and consistent implementation of its recommendations in all dioceses. Champions for cultural change will be appointed and pilot dioceses are being identified to trial the full implementation of the recommendations. Work will need to be undertaken to determine how the findings of the report will be taken up in the Diocese of Exeter.

During discussion the following issues were discussed:

- A concern was raised that the audio recording and written records of the sessions were not as easily or as quickly available on the national website as might reasonably be expected.
- Clarification was sought on how the issues arising out of the voting down of the take note motion on Marriage and Same Sex Relationships would be dealt with locally. It was noted that following the protocol set out by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Diocesan and Suffragan Bishops will meet with the General Synod representatives from this Diocese on 11th April as a first step in taking matters forward. It was also noted that the voting records on the take note motion were a matter of public record.
- In terms of taking forward the implementation of 'Setting God's People Free', it was noted that the Diocesan Chair of House of Laity would aim to consult with the Chairs of the other Houses in the near future. There will also be a meeting of deanery lay chairs on the same subject later in the year.

8. To receive a report from the Scrutiny Panel for the Diocesan Mission and Growth Fund
Paper S/06/2017

Mrs Annie Jefferies (Tavistock Deanery and member of the Diocesan Mission and Growth Fund Scrutiny Panel) highlighted key points from the accompanying paper. She encouraged applicants to include the following with their applications:

- A current Mission Action Plan
- Evidence of local PCC support, countersigned by their archdeacon.
- An indication of how projects will be financed in the longer term once the start-up grant had been used.

She confirmed that of the total fund of £250,000, £86,000 had been dispersed in the first round of applications and £87,000 in the second. The second round contained a wider range of projects. The deadline for the next round of applications is 23rd May 2017.

The Bishop of Exeter in the chair

9. Questions

From the Revd. Graham Hamilton (General Synod) to the President of Diocesan Synod:

"Following the withdrawal of the Bishop of Burnley's nomination to the see of Sheffield, and his experience of highly personalised attacks, what hope is there in the Church of England for mutual flourishing or radical inclusion for those who in good conscience cannot assent to the ordination or consecration of women?"

Response by the Bishop of Exeter, President of Diocesan Synod

"I share your sadness and dismay at Bishop Philip's withdrawal. Bishop Philip is a person of huge integrity with a passion for Christ and the Gospel. Personally I was thrilled at his appointment both to Burnley and then to Sheffield, and equally dismayed at his reluctant withdrawal. The House of Bishops does not meet for two months, but I'm sure it will be on our agenda. I feel Philip's forced withdrawal has damaged the renewed trust that has

been emerging nationally across the Church of England following the decision to ordain women to the episcopate. As far as Bishop Nick, Bishop Sarah and I are concerned, please know that we will continue to ensure to the best of our ability that the Five Guiding Principles are embodied in the life of this Diocese with generosity as together we seek to build trust and cooperation.”

10. Farewell to the retiring Diocesan Secretary, Mr. Mark Beedell

At the conclusion of the meeting Mr. Mark Beedell, the Diocesan Secretary, was invited to speak on the occasion of his retirement. He paid tribute to the work of staff from the diocesan offices as well as the members of diocesan synod with whom he has worked over the last twenty years.

A gift was presented to Mr. Beedell with thanks and esteem expressed by Mr. Giles Frampton, Chairman of the Board of Finance, Mrs Marguerite Shapland, Chair of the House of Laity, the Revd. Preb Mike Partridge, Chair of the House of Clergy, and the Bishop of Exeter.

Deemed Items

11. To receive a response from the Bishop’s Diocesan Council on the question of how the Diocesan Synod should ‘stimulate partnerships to help in reducing poverty, homelessness, vulnerability and injustice in the Diocese and beyond’
Paper S/07/2017
12. To receive an update from the Common Fund Working Group **Paper S/08/2017**
13. To receive the annual report of the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches
Paper S/09/2017
14. To receive the meeting dates of Diocesan Synod and the Bishop’s Diocesan Council for 2018
Paper S/10/2017